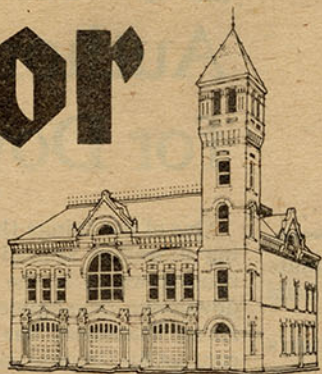


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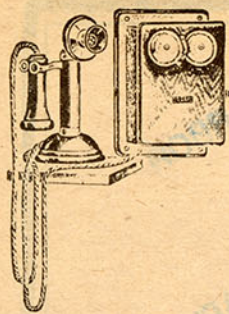
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DECEMBER, 1976



Drawing by Thomas Nast, 1890





# Update

## A Transit Loop For Downtown?

One of the most frequently proposed central Ann Arbor projects of late has been a transit loop system—a flock of buses following the same route which would be spaced 5 to 10 minutes apart, be cheap to ride (10 cents), and thus provide easy, quick access from one part of the area to another. All of the recent downtown planning and circulation reports recommend such a system, and city council has endorsed the scheme.

The major benefit of a transit loop system would be to reduce the amount of car traffic in the downtown area. Rather than jump in your car to get, for example, from City Hall to South University, or from the Library to University Hospital, it will be simpler (and cheaper) to hop on one of these frequent buses.

Such a bus route would also allow people to park on the periphery of downtown where parking is more available and have efficient access to the entire central area via bus. Finally, the system should stimulate downtown business by putting people within reach of stores which could be considered too much trouble to get to by auto or foot. For example, a transit loop could make Main Street shops a lot more attractive to University personnel during their lunch break.

The state of Michigan has at a preliminary level indicated its willingness to provide enough money to buy six mini-buses (at about \$30,000 a mini-bus) for the project and to fund its operations for the first year (another \$200,000). The earliest such a system would be implemented is fall of 1977.

It is not at all clear, however, that the AATA board will vote to apply for these state funds. Some board members are concerned that AATA already has its hands full operating its present extensive system. There is also concern that a transit loop might be competing with existing AATA services. And perhaps most significantly, there is concern over how the loop system would be paid for once the one-year state subsidy is over.

If the board does vote to ask for the state funds, it will have to decide between two proposed loop systems: a short-loop system (between State and Ashley) and a long-loop system (between First and Observatory). There is no indication of when the board will decide for or against the system.

## Neighborhood Plan Working Papers Invite Citizen Comments

Sometimes planning studies are completely formulated before the public eye ever gets a look at them. By then, so much costly staff time has gone into them that suggested changes from the public are often difficult to integrate into the plan.

The Ann Arbor planning department's Central Area Neighborhood Plan is proceeding differently. Planner Marc Reuter is disseminating informal working papers to the interested public at a very preliminary stage. Hopefully, many interested parties will read the papers and relay additional concerns and opinions early so the study can deal with them,

rather than waiting until the last-minute public hearing stage soon before official adoption.

The working papers consist of Marc's thoughts and research on land use, housing, public services and improvements, parks, and streetscapes. (The Central Area Neighborhood Study covers residential areas from Seventh Street east to Cambridge and the Arboretum, and from Stadium on the south to the Huron River on the north. See August's *Observer*.) The papers make for clear, interesting reading for anyone concerned with a particular neighborhood or central neighborhoods in general. Topics include: a short history of early land use and neighborhoods; why the decline in new construction; housing and neighborhood quality; actual versus allowable housing densities; and special problems of the Allen's Creek flood plain (roughly, the low area on both sides of the Ann Arbor Railroad tracks).

Some interesting trends are apparent, including a trend toward lower densities in campus "student ghetto" areas, as other, lower-cost options develop in subsidized outlying projects like Arrowwood Trains and Arbor Park. This trend could significantly weaken the cohesiveness of campus life.

Interested individuals and groups may obtain the working papers by calling City Planning, 3rd floor, City Hall (994-2800) and asking for Marc Reuter. Comments are encouraged.

## A Memorial For Eck Stanger

The Historic District Commission has resolved to establish a special memorial to Eck Stanger, who died November 4, and some friends have suggested naming the Liberty-Division park after him. Eck was involved in local history from many points of view: he photographed it for most of five decades as the Ann Arbor News chief photographer; he was a member of the Historic District Commission from its inception until his death; and he was a fascinating source of anecdotes and perceptions of local subjects and events. He combined unusual qualities: being rooted in a place (he grew up on Fourth Street in the Old West Side German community and lived in Ann Arbor all his life), with a cosmopolitan sense of tolerant perspective. Some people have a proprietary sense of local history and feel that only life-long residents are entitled to deal with it. Eck, to the contrary, was encouraging and stimulating to outsiders.

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# Downtown Development Authority: A Workable Tool for Downtown Projects?

One of the things that will get increasing attention around City Hall in the coming weeks is the idea of forming a downtown development authority. Ann Arbor Tomorrow has studied the DDA concept for the past year. Now it is urging city council to take a serious look at it. (Study sessions by council members will begin in the middle of December.) So far, individual council members are not taking a firm stand for or against the proposal, but there is general appreciation of the proposal's significance. The council's decision on whether to implement this means of planning and financing major downtown projects could make a big difference in the future of downtown.

A downtown development authority, its supporters say, can be a catalyst to get major building projects going in the area. There is a strong support, for example, for a large medium-income apartment building downtown. The 300 or so people such a building would bring downtown to live would be both an economic stimulus to nearby stores as well as an enlivening factor for the downtown area.

But high interest rates presently make such a development unlikely without some form of city assistance. Provision for a downtown development authority, made possible through state legislation in 1975, could handle just this kind of problem. The authority, as outlined in state law, is a flexible tool for large scale downtown revitalization, but it can also be used by a community in a precise, delimited way.

Assume, for example, that city council agrees it is a good idea for a privately owned 200-unit medium-income apartment building to be built on downtown land now owned by the city. The council could then vote to create a downtown development authority headed by a board of nine members who could legally be restricted to implementing this one project. The law states the board must be predominantly composed of downtown property owners and residents. Because the DDA board must approve the plan to build the apartment building, there is greater likelihood for downtown support for an approved project.

According to Ann Arbor Tomorrow board chairman Ulrich Stoll's calculations, a 200-unit apartment complex costs about \$5 million. Such a project could be developed wholly within private resources, but local investors have found that construction, land, and financing costs would price the project out of the

market. To bring the project within the moderate-rental price range requires some form of subsidy or assistance to reduce costs. By offering the developer the needed \$5 million at 3% interest rather than the going rate of about 9%, the project becomes an attractive idea.

The development authority, using what is called tax increment financing, could borrow money through the city bonding capabilities at 6½% and loan to the developer at 3%. If you borrow \$5 million at 6½% and lend it at 3%, you're losing about \$130,000, so the question is: where does this \$130,000 come from? Here we get to the heart of tax increment financing, one of the most interesting features of the DDA legislation.

Given explicit approval of the city council, the DDA can use the projected increase in property taxes the city would collect due to the new apartment building (about \$180,000 in the case of a \$5 million building) as the basis for paying the needed \$130,000. In effect, then, the city is actually gaining tax revenues (about \$50,000 the first year) as a result of the project. Were the apartment building not otherwise built, the city would not see any of the new \$180,000 in property taxes.

The plan, at least as outlined, is attractive, but the initial reaction of council members is wary. Although most members say they are interested in studying the proposal in detail and will seriously consider adopting it, no one has yet spoken in favor of it. Democrats tend to wonder if the project is just going to put money in the pockets of a few people or actually have the intended effect of enhancing the quality of life downtown. Republicans worry that a DDA board could wield too much power for a group of unelected citizens.

Analysis of the state enabling legislation appears to make this latter concern unwarranted. Although some fear a DDA could become nearly autonomous like the Housing Commission or Transit Authority, there is not much similarity because the DDA's operating and financing monies must all be expressly approved by city council. Thus it is hard to imagine much of substance that a DDA could do without Council's approval. Furthermore, a downtown development authority is established not for perpetuity, but to accomplish specifically outlined goals. After they are accomplished, the DDA is dissolved.

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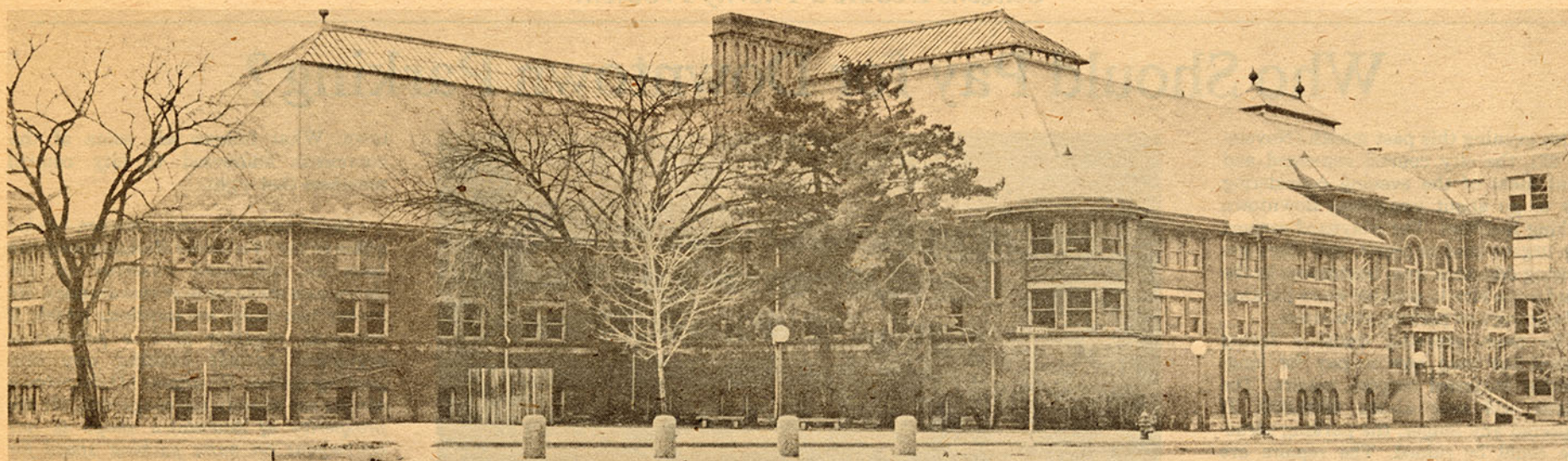
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# The Regents' Decision on Barbour-Waterman: Demolition or a Detailed Re-use Study?



Dave Breen

The University regents will vote once again on the demolition of the Barbour-Waterman gymnasiums at their December meeting. Last March they approved the University financial and planning staffs' recommendation for demolition. But protests from concerned citizens that the planned demolition was based on an insufficient consideration of alternative uses of the buildings caused the regents to ask for a more complete rationale for the decision.

The outcry would have been unlikely twenty-five years ago, but historic preservation is today a much more widespread concern in the University community. A "Recycle Barbour-Waterman" committee was formed by Kathie Gourlay and professor Geoff Shepherd. They circulated a 2,000-signature petition asking the regents to reconsider their decision and enlisted the support of the Ann Arbor Historic District Commission, and the state Department of History.

Criticism of the regents' decision and how it was made (without a detailed feasibility study on reusing the buildings) prompted President Fleming in August to request a report about the demolition decision and "generally about the present approach of the university in evaluating the usefulness and potentials of older structures," in the report's own words. That report, authored by Bill Sturgis, who is assistant to financial vice-president Wilbur Pierpont, was presented in November.

As a means of quelling criticism, the Sturgis report has been disappointing. Preservation architect Rick Neumann, for example, was prepared to be convinced by the report that demolition, though painful, was necessary when all the economic, aesthetic, historical, and planning needs, costs, and alternatives were weighed. After reading the study, however, he commented, "I would hope there's more behind the study than what's on paper. It certainly isn't an adequate feasibility study to examine the alternatives."

In a nutshell, here's Sturgis's argument for demolition:

- The need for the buildings as they are is not great, whereas the need for the site is congruent with the "expressed priority need for space" for the Chemistry Department. Funding of chemistry expansion, however, is not in the short-range future.

- The cost of keeping the buildings is substantial. Annual operating costs (utilities, custodians, etc.) is estimated at \$135,000. To renew the buildings for their present athletic functions, University staff estimates are \$250,000 for immediate repairs to roof and masonry, and \$2,450,000 to bring mechanical and safety systems up to standards of new buildings.

- The significance of the buildings is not clearly outstanding. Asked by Sturgis to review the buildings, architectural historian and U-M architecture professor Kingsbury Marzolf said he was "neutral" about the buildings' retention from an architectural historical viewpoint. He told us, "personally, I would rather see them saved than destroyed." Architectural historian and professor Leonard Eaton declined to comment. In terms of associative history, the buildings do not rate as high as some. For instance, Sturgis writes, the Michigan League is more important to women's organization, Hill Auditorium is connected with more famous people, and the Diag and Engin Arch are more beloved among students and alumni.

"A serious question has been raised about the completeness of studies about potential uses of the buildings," Sturgis wrote in his report. He devoted only two paragraphs to the topic of potential uses, however. The University staff, he said, had previously drawn up a list of eighteen priority construction projects proposed on campus. The staff apparently judged that none of these projects were capable of being incorporated into the existing Barbour-Waterman buildings, and Sturgis concluded, "in considering the options seen as available for reuse, the University staff did not consider a detailed study (of Barbour-Waterman) necessary."

Recycling proponent Geoff Shepherd calls the University's reluctance to conduct a thorough reuse study "catch-22 logic": "The buildings exist and are assets, perhaps with a high value. That value depends on alternative uses for them. Yet the University staff will not canvass or analyze those alternative uses thoroughly." He suggests some possible uses: classrooms and offices, a women's center, theater, recreation, museum display and storage, library reading and storage, alumni center, and chemistry department space. Different departments and organizations could share the buildings. According to the Sturgis report, "It is not considered wise or economic to seek out non-priority needs for an investment."

Shepherd also criticizes:

- the absence of other authors or consultants for the report who could disinterestedly reflect additional expertise on engineering, economic, historic and architectural issues. (Sturgis himself participated in the original recommendation to raze the buildings.)

- the report's failure to give facts on the Chemistry Department's space needs, together with their costs and benefits.

- the report's brief dismissal of the suggestion to provide space for the Chemistry Department by demolishing Waterman while saving Barbour.

- the report's failure to mention that the buildings are structurally sound. (That was structural engineer and U-M architecture professor Bob Darvas's opinion after inspecting them. The only immediate problem was the leaky skylight.)

Shepherd concluded his critique, made on behalf of the "Recycle Barbour-Waterman" committee, by requesting the regents to postpone demolition indefinitely while authorizing a feasibility study of "the best alternative short and long-term uses," to be conducted by a broad-based committee of diverse experts sympathetic to reusing the buildings.

The regents face an either-or decision that could be agonizing: to invest in a feasibility study, or to obliterate the

buildings without taking a closer look at alternatives.

Barbour-Waterman's place in the overall architectural character of the campus was not considered in the report. Some consider the campus a mosaic of architectural styles that give a visual sense of continuity with the University's past history. The Sturgis report evaluated Barbour-Waterman from a present-day economic viewpoint without considering their future value. Buildings like these are rapidly dwindling in number; in fifty years they will seem much more striking. Preservationists are asking the regents to follow a traditionally un-American course: to weigh future cultural interests against the pragmatic interests of immediate efficiency.

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# Update/ Continued

## Citizens Debate a Thorny Problem

### Who Should Pay for Downtown Parking?

One evening this past month (November 22), the city council convened and spent most of the evening considering how to go about upgrading downtown parking facilities. The Maynard carport is in urgent need of repair, and there are growing demands from businesses in the area for the city to provide more parking by building new parking structures.

The most pressing decision facing council has been how to pay for long-overdue Maynard carport repairs. The repairs will cost about \$800,000. If neglected any longer, the parking structure could be ruined. The repairs are overdue because council hasn't been able to decide who should be taxed to pay the repair bill. Council members have thus far been unwilling to use taxes from the entire Ann Arbor community to pay such a large sum for a structure which primarily benefits nearby businesses. But finding a way to put a special parking tax on downtown businesses has proven a much more difficult matter than first imagined.

The roots of the present impasse on funding downtown parking go back nearly 30 years to when Ann Arbor pioneered the plan of having the city build parking structures and pay for them by charging sufficient parking rates. This notion of a self-supporting parking system, which seemed sensible back in the 1940's, turned out to be untenable. The reason was the explosion of outlying shopping centers around Ann Arbor beginning in the early 1960's. These shopping centers have been stiff competition for many central Ann Arbor businesses, and the free parking they provide has always been one of their advantages. As a result, downtown merchants have become increasingly concerned over the increase in downtown parking rates, which acts as a further incentive for people to go elsewhere to shop.

Consequently, the parking rates have been kept down, and the parking system has not broken even since the mid-1960's. Money from the city's general fund has had to make up the difference. But these parking system deficits were not big enough to attract much attention until it became evident several years ago that the Maynard carport needed thousands of dollars in repairs. One way to pay for these repairs would be by creating another hefty hike in parking rates, but the threat that such an action might precipitate a serious decline in downtown business made council reluctant to follow this route.

Another alternative would be to impose a higher citywide tax to pay for the needed repairs. Because the downtown area is much more than simply another shopping center (almost half of this area is occupied by the University, churches,



Maynard carport. The erosion of concrete along the ramps caused by salt dripping from entering cars presents the city with a \$800,000 repair bill. Deciding who pays the bill has opened up broader issues concerning downtown parking.

and governmental units), there is some merit to the argument that all the citizens should bear the load of maintaining downtown facilities. But presently council appears to consider downtown just another shopping center, and to tax it accordingly.

So the idea has emerged to put an additional tax on the downtown commercial district to pay for the repairs of Maynard carport—in other words, a special assessment. There seemed to be enough of a consensus among merchants that a special tax was preferable to raising parking rates for customers that it seemed like a workable solution. But an initial attempt this past summer to tax the local businesses located around Maynard carport failed because of the many protests filed. Many of the affected businesses claimed that their customers came from the campus, and that they received little or no benefit from Maynard carport. More vehemently opposed to the special tax were the churches and apartment buildings which would also have been taxed.

Council therefore backed away from that solution. The mayor appointed a special parking committee composed mostly of downtown business representatives to try and find another way to finance repairs. What they came up with is a much broader package: a special assessment would be imposed on the entire downtown area from approximately Ashley all the way to South University. This special tax would pay 60% of the costs for the following:

- repairing Maynard William/Fourth, and Forest carports
- purchasing Forest carport
- building two new 500 space carports
- keeping an extra \$70,000 a year for needed carport repairs

The total cost of this package is estimated to be \$5,550,000. The remaining 40% would be paid for out of parking revenues.

This is the proposal the city council had before it the night the parking financing problem was considered. Like many problems which begin as a mundane matter of finding enough money to repair or build something, the implications of the financing issue have broadened into issues of much greater import for downtown.

town. What follows are some of the comments addressed to city council members that night:

Clan Crawford, a zoning lawyer, has his office in the Wolverine Building and has been an interested observer of the downtown scene for over two decades. He makes two major assumptions which, if accepted, together form a persuasive argument against building any new parking spaces. He argues (1) downtown streets are already too congested, (2) the prosperity of downtown shops is not contingent on more parking space for customers.

I support the idea of repairing the carports. I have grave reservations, however, about the idea of building carports for a thousand new cars in the downtown area. My concern has to do with the capacity of the road system in downtown Ann Arbor to handle more cars. I don't have a lot of statistics, but I am downtown every day, and I have the distinct impression that our downtown road system is handling all the cars it can handle and still work reasonably well at the present time.

I assume an increase in capacity can be gotten by removing more curbside parking, to make more room for moving vehicles. I don't think that's a good idea. It seems to me that trend has gone far enough in downtown Ann Arbor. I think curbside parking has a unique utility for the person who just wants to run in somewhere and get something. I am also aware that there are people who will not drive into carports.

I think it is worth knowing that 25 years ago downtown was a prosperous retail center without nearly the amount of offstreet parking that it has today. There



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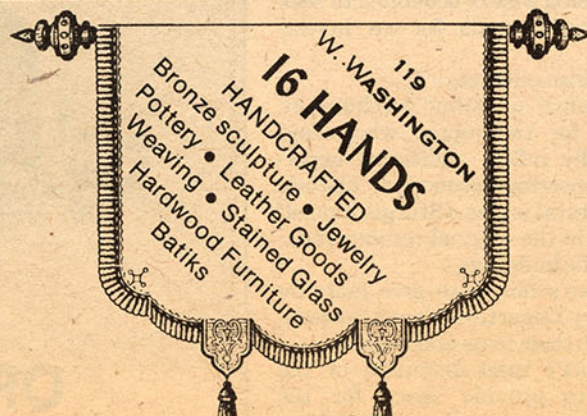
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Tight parking in central Ann Arbor is not a recent problem, as this photo of a State Street scene taken in the 1920's indicates. Back then, curbside parking was the major means of parking for autos downtown. Since then, curbside parking has steadily shrunk and roads have been widened to handle progressively greater volumes of traffic. Some people are now questioning just where the city ought to draw the line in its policy of encouraging more and more autos in the downtown area.

was a lot more on-street parking back then. I think the thing that has happened is that there are so many more office buildings and office workers, that they require a lot more parking. It seems to me that the biggest problem downtown isn't that people can't get in to park, it's frankly that a lot of the businesses in the downtown area are failing to make good use of getting the business market already downtown.

I think that if we are going to get more people downtown, there are only two realistic ways to do it: one is to have more places to live downtown, and the other is to make much more use of our enormous resources which we've applied to this bus system, to remove money from this dial-a-ride system to get really good bus lines to and from the downtown area.

Henry Merry, as an automobileless renter living near campus, can't see why he should have to pay more rent (which would be the result of a special parking assessment because his apartment building falls within the assessment district) to pay for repairing and building parking structures. Mr. Merry goes on to make a broader point—that the city of Ann Arbor through its policies ought to encourage people without autos, not those with them.

I live in Tower Plaza. And I live there because I do not own an automobile. And I have no intention of owning an automobile. Special assessments are for benefits. I do not see how I can get any benefits from this special assessment.

You should give much more regard than you do to the people who do not own automobiles. The automobile is a source of a great deal of trouble, particularly in cities. I think you are treating people without automobiles as second class citizens rather than ideal citizens. People without cars create much less problems than those who do have them.

I've lived here in Ann Arbor for approximately 2½ years. And I moved here because of retirement. I was teaching in Indiana before retirement and began looking around the country and studied a number of places where I could live. I thought it would be highly desirable to live in a university town. I checked out a number of such towns in various ways and eventually decided on Ann Arbor. A number of factors were involved in my decision: a good apartment building—Tower Plaza—which is near the campus in a small shopping district with sufficient convenience stores that you could live without an automobile conveniently.

And I have enjoyed living in Ann Arbor. At least until the council starts talking about assessments for parking structures. I must admit I have an aesthetic antagonism to them. I walk around Ann Arbor and I find it a very beautiful city except for the parking garages. I think they are the eyesores of the city. I would not be unhappy if tomorrow morning they all disappeared.

Martha Schmidt, a resident in Maynard House just across from the campus, drives home the point that a high percentage of renters in central Ann Arbor don't have cars. Therefore, she argues, it is unfair to tax these tenants through the special parking assessment for something they don't use or need.

The Maynard House has 101 tenants. I polled those tenants one by one and I discovered that of all those tenants, eight park regularly or semi-regularly in the Maynard carport. I also discovered that 74 of our tenants do not own cars at all. I think it is distinctly unfair that the owners of the Maynard House should have to pay for something which gives them so little benefit.

Guy Larcom was city administrator from 1956 to 1973 and now is the director of Ann Arbor Tomorrow. Mr. Larcom's experience convinces him that if more parking isn't made available in the central area, the economic vitality of the area will decline.

I hope that regardless of how the council decides about the special assessment way of financing, you will conclude that the improvement and expansion of the parking system has to continue. This city has carried on off-street parking as a public service since the mid-1940's, and I don't think there's any question that it has helped make this downtown in every way.

Recently, you approved the downtown plan and strategy [of the city's planning department]. Part of that strategy recommended there should be additional parking. The circulation plan calls for downtown parking. The new AATA downtown circulator shuttle calls for parking. The whole concept of the circulation plan, the downtown plan, and the AATA shuttle is that there will be a point where the cars will stop downtown and people will get out of their cars and move around in some other way. You can't have park and ride unless there is a place to park.

In a recent survey of parking downtown by two of our researchers, they came up with a current shortage of 409 spaces, and the next year about 1000 spaces. So hopefully, regardless of how you go with special assessment, you will have some kind of parking plan.

As for financing this needed parking and repairs, this is a tough one. I don't think there is any question that the parking system, after all these years of operating out of parking revenues from structures and meters, has reached the point where revenues really can't do the job. The other utilities can increase their rates. But parking customers can go elsewhere to shop—to Briarwood and so on. They don't have to come downtown. And this is the crux of the problem you face.

It has been estimated that you would need to increase parking rates 40%-50% to meet this \$5 million needed for repairs and new structures. The question you're

facing is should you go to the 40%-50% increase in rates and really turn off the users of the structures. Or do you go with special assessment, which is in a way equitable because it hits everybody that in some way benefits, but is inequitable because like all special assessments everybody doesn't benefit the same.

The basis for special assessment, let me remind you, is the fact that buildings in the central area of this city are exempt from the parking requirements that they would have to meet if they built outside the downtown. If you built a 50-unit structure downtown, you wouldn't have to provide parking as you would be required to outside the downtown area, and this would save you at least \$150,000.

The reason the parking exempt district exists really is that you couldn't get housing with this type of requirement. You couldn't get offices built. So what you've done in this exempt district is give the city the obligation of providing the parking in exempt districts.

The city will provide this parking whenever possible out of parking revenues, as it has for years, but the city can provide it by special assessment if special assessment is the only way you can get needed facilities and repairs. No one wants to pay special assessments. Yet you—the council—have to make a choice, it seems to us, between 40%-50% increases in rates for those who use the

system, or charge 60% of the cost for repairs and new structures to the properties in the area. In the end, it seems that the city does have to move ahead. You do have to have parking to take care of the needs of people in the area.

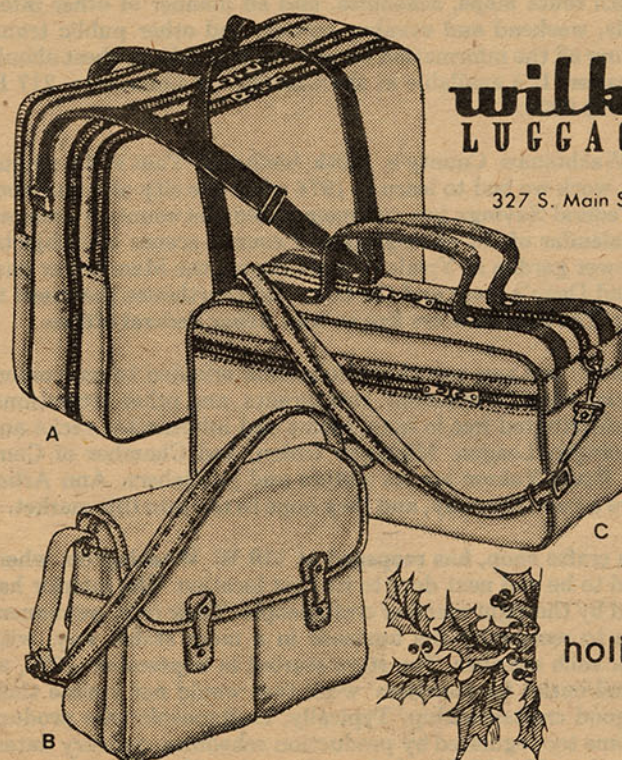
Arthur Carpenter, a local lawyer, developed Kerrytown back in the late 1960's. Mr. Carpenter's argument is that a healthy commercial climate is the backbone of central Ann Arbor, and the basis for this healthy climate is attracting people from outside the central area to come into the area to shop. Adequate parking is one of the things which makes the downtown more attractive to shoppers.

I want to talk tonight about the significance of the city for all of us. Now I've heard people say that because they're tenants downtown and they can walk instead of using cars, they don't need the parking and therefore it is unfair to expect them to pay any part of the special assessment. But the reason the downtown is so attractive to them is because there are people with cars who patronize the merchants of downtown. The shoppers who come to Main St., who come to State St., who come to Kerrytown. Without the people with cars those places could not survive downtown—downtown would be a drag for those now enjoying apartment living and walking to nearby quality stores. So downtown is all of one piece. We cannot have an active, vibrant downtown, a place where people want to live unless we provide adequate parking.

As can be seen from these citizens' remarks, there are broad policy questions intermixed in this complex controversy over financing downtown parking facilities:

- should downtown businesses be forced to pay for public facilities such as parking structures when downtown is more than just another shopping center?
- how is the amount of need for new parking to be measured?
- how is the character of downtown going to be affected if provisions are made for more cars to use the area?
- can buses perform a substantial part of the job cars have in bringing people downtown?

There are no clear-cut answers to any of the above questions, which helps explain why city council can't decide on how to plan and pay for downtown parking facilities. What the council eventually comes up with is anybody's guess.



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## Update/ Continued

### Short News Items

Plans are moving slowly forward to have a feasibility study made for a trolley-line along Liberty Street or other possible sites. The AATA has secured \$10,000 from the state to fund the project, and a committee headed by AATA board member Willie Horton is sending out letters to engineering firms explaining the nature of the study and asking if they are interested in doing it. From the pool of interested firms, the committee will then award a contract for the study. The earliest Mr. Horton expects a contract will be signed is January or February of 1977. Another three months is allotted for completion of the study. The study is supposed to make clear just what it would cost to put in a trolley line, and what its impact on traffic and parking would be.

Concerning a senior citizens' housing project, downtown or anywhere else in Ann Arbor—things seem to be in limbo. On November 15 city council requested HUD to start moving on the 180-unit project allocated to the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area last year by either funding HUD's number three choice at Packard near Gladstone and Stone School Road, or by reopening the entire project selection process to allow new developers with new sites to be considered. (Mayor Wheeler vetoed the #1 HUD choice near Briarwood because it was too isolated; Ypsi voters refused to sell the city land required for site #2.)

But HUD may be bowing out of the senior housing scene. Nationally the trend seems to be for HUD to fund and work through local and state housing development authorities. That would give state agencies like MSHDA (Michigan State Housing Development Authority) a double wallop in offering low-to-moderate income housing. Not only would they be able to borrow money cheaper as a state agency using tax-free municipal bonds to finance the projects, they could also use federal funds previously available only to HUD to help directly subsidize rents for low-income people. The developer of the Gladstone site is now applying for MSHDA funds.

If MSHDA replaces HUD in sponsoring new housing, that could be good news for those who want senior citizens housing downtown. MSHDA has more flexible requirements than HUD. Unlike HUD, it doesn't insist on large 3 to 5 acres sites, which would be extremely difficult to assemble downtown. MSHDA also has a much better reputation for working together with local governing units in building housing projects.

Rising utility costs are burdening everyone, and when you're the size of the University of Michigan, the amount of money involved is staggering. The University's total utilities bill in 1969-70 was \$2.4 million. By 1972-73 this figure had almost doubled to \$4.2 million. This year the bill will be \$11 million. And by 1979-80 this figure is again expected to double—to \$22.5 million. Recently the regents authorized \$452,000 for energy-saving projects. Energy savings resulting from these added measures should offset the capital costs in about two years.

Renovations and higher rents for the Darling Building at 225 East Liberty mean that the Ann Arbor Community Health Center (formerly the Free People's Clinic) will be closing to the public on December 16. Regular patients due for their annual exams should call 761-8952 as soon as possible for an appointment. The clinic was established to provide low-cost health care and to encourage patients to assume an active role in caring for their health. All doctors and patient counsellors volunteer their time; the only overhead is paid coordinators plus rent and supplies. Clinic coordinators are launching a fundraising campaign to reestablish the clinic as a self-sufficient neighborhood facility to take up the slack in central-area low-cost health care when St. Joseph Hospital and its Walk-In Clinic move in June. They request interested donors or volunteers to write Ann Arbor Community Health Center Project, 313 Pauline, Ann Arbor, 48103, or call 761-8952. An interim office at an undecided location will continue after December 16, offering counseling and support services but no direct medical services.

Ann Arbor Transportation Authority has issued a new rainbow-colored "Owner's Manual" for bus riders with route maps, schedules, and all manner of other information on fares, dial-a-ride, weekend and evening service, and other public transportation modes. Assembling all the information on one sturdy fold-out sheet should make using AATA a lot easier. It's available at the Chamber of Commerce, 217 E. Washington, or by calling 973-0300.

January 1, 1977 marks Washtenaw County's 150th birthday. That's its sesquicentennial (a very difficult work we had to learn in 1974 when the city of Ann Arbor turned 150.) Ann Arbor Federal Savings has commemorated the county's anniversary with an interesting calendar of old photographs of county scenes and objects, including the geometric flower garden at Ypsilanti's old depot; the Manchester dam and commercial district; and Dean's store and the fancy old courthouse that used to be in downtown Ann Arbor. The calendars are free at Ann Arbor Federal offices.

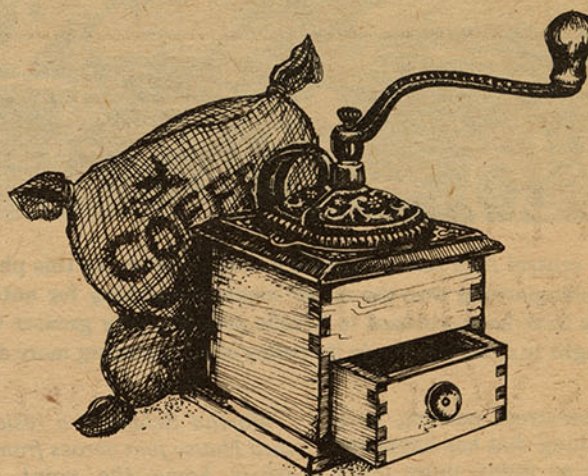
"About Ann Arbor Magazine" is a new monthly publication oriented to newcomers and visitors featuring articles on entertainment, restaurants, and other attractions. It will appear in January, distributed free in hotel rooms and information racks and also at places like the Michigan League, Michigan Union, and Chamber of Commerce. Claudia Capos and Paula Yokum are its editors and publishers. Ann Arbor has about 2,500,000 visitors a year, they say, and they hope to tap into this market.

16 Hands, the cooperative crafts shop, has reopened at 119 W. Washington, where Paul's Musical Repair used to be and next door to its first location. The interior has been completely remodelled by the eight member craftspeople. Their new, permanent location has led the group to reorganize the business in a more stable way, with separate responsibilities for each member. The store started in September, 1975, as an attempt to create a retail outlet for members' work that would not violate their desire for autonomy and good craftsmanship. Typically, craftspeople who produce for other retailers can become too regulated by production schedules, delivery dates, and cost requirements. A shop like 16 Hands permits personal contact between craftspeople and customers, together with freedom from the drudgery of tending store daily. Each craftsman works one day out of eight.

Poor health has forced Edward Paul to close up shop after 27 years at 119 W. Washington as Paul's Musical Repairs. His doctor told him to cut down to a few hours of work a day. Paul specialized in quality instrument repairs at a time when many music shops stopped doing repair work. He will continue to do repairs on a limited basis at home. Customers are encouraged to contact him at his home at 704 Bruce (NO 2-9824).

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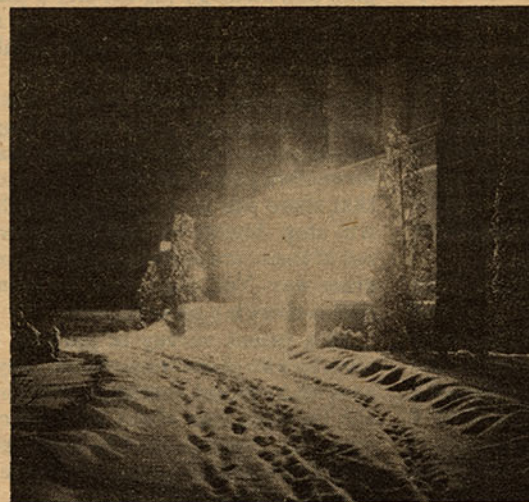
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# Local History

Mr. Wetherbee's Reminiscences

## After Eighth Grade Bert Wetherbee Starts Work at Wagner's

By HERBERT T. WETHERBEE

As we pick up on the late Herbert T. Wetherbee's story, it is 1899. The Wetherbee family, since our last episode, has moved again several times; Mr. Wetherbee thought his mother must have rather liked moving. Now they are at Mrs. Hanlon's on North Fourth Avenue near Beakes. Carpentry work was hard to find for the elder Wetherbee, so his wife and oldest son have pitched in to supplement the family finances by helping him cane chairs.

After I completed the eighth grade, it was decided that I had better go to work. Our neighbor, Mrs. Huntley, made vests for Wagner Company tailors, and she heard them talking of hiring a boy for the store. So I got the job, at \$1.50 a week for six months, then \$2.00 each week. Each year I would get a raise of \$1.00. (This was more an apprenticeship than a full-fledged job. A good wage was \$2.00 a day, or \$12.00 a week.) Each year I would get a raise of \$1.00.

I started to work when I was 13½ years old and never was out of work one day for fifty years until I retired on February first, 1950.

I went to work at 7 o'clock in the morning and sometimes in the winter it was still dark. I turned up Beakes Street

to Main Street, then up Main to Wagner and Company. I was always on time.

My first job was to sweep out the store and then clean the sidewalk and the gutters around the hitching posts along the curb. Main Street had about six inches of dust, no pavement, and the dust was always flying. Now and then the sprinkling wagon would wet the dust down for a few minutes. It was my duty to keep the store dusted at all times and to empty the waste baskets.

One morning while emptying the basket from under Mr. Wagner's desk, I discovered a box in the basket filled with theater tickets, all good for the gallery. (Mr. Wagner was a member of the Theater Office.) So Harry Mead and I, the only ones who know about the tickets, had gallery seats for the whole winter. They used different colors every night, so we would watch the ticket seller to be sure we had the right ticket. We had all colors.

We would go out and get in line to the stairway outside and hike up the stairs to the gallery, waiting our turn to get in. We saw many good shows without a penny, which was about all we had anyway. There was Peer Gynt, Al G. Field's Minstrels, and all the stock shows such as "Ten Nights in a Barroom," "Lavender and Old Lace," and others.

The old Court House occupied a whole block just across Main Street from the Schiapacasse candy store, where we used to hang out. We played in the shade



Postcard: c. 1905

The Courthouse's tree-shaded lawn was a pleasant place to pass the time and play when Bert Wetherbee was a boy. Erected in 1878, it was demolished for the County Building in 1954. In the rear the richly embellished Post Office Block can be seen, where Bert and his friends used to drop in on Salvation Army hymn-singing sessions.

of the many big trees on the Court House lawn.

In the evening, when the Salvation Army had closed its service on the corner, we would follow to their hall, an empty store in the Post Office block, and attend the service sitting in the back row. Got so we knew all the songs or hymns they could sing, and we would sing along with them until we got too noisy and then, out we would go.

We marched behind Company I when our men went to camp for the Spanish-American War. They camped at Island Lake up near Brighton, and from there went to Tampa, Florida on their way to Cuba. Dad, Mother, Frank, and I went up to Island Lake to see them. Rented a horse and buggy, lost our way and had to travel a round-about way until we reached there with just about time to turn around and come home.

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## Local History/ Continued

# Christmas Gardens: An Old Tradition For Ann Arbor Germans

Nativity scenes and tiny villages, with their realistic details on a miniature scale, add to the charm of Christmas for many people today. Many of Ann Arbor's old German families developed miniature scenes beneath the Christmas tree into a minor art form, using much craftsmanship and imagination to create castles, mills, or villages populated with tiny

people and animals. These "Christmas gardens," as they were called, ranged from modest collections of cardboard houses to elaborate carved and painted layouts, sometimes including a nativity scene and often featuring water in some form, real or imaginary. Millwheels often moved, and moss and rocks surrounded little ponds that were sometimes mirrors,

sometimes real water with spraying fountains in the middle.

Many older Ann Arborites remember going out to the woods just before Christmas to gather moss to represent the grassy floor of the Christmas garden.

In Linda Eberbach's family home at 402 S. Fourth Avenue at Williams, the older children would drive out in a buggy

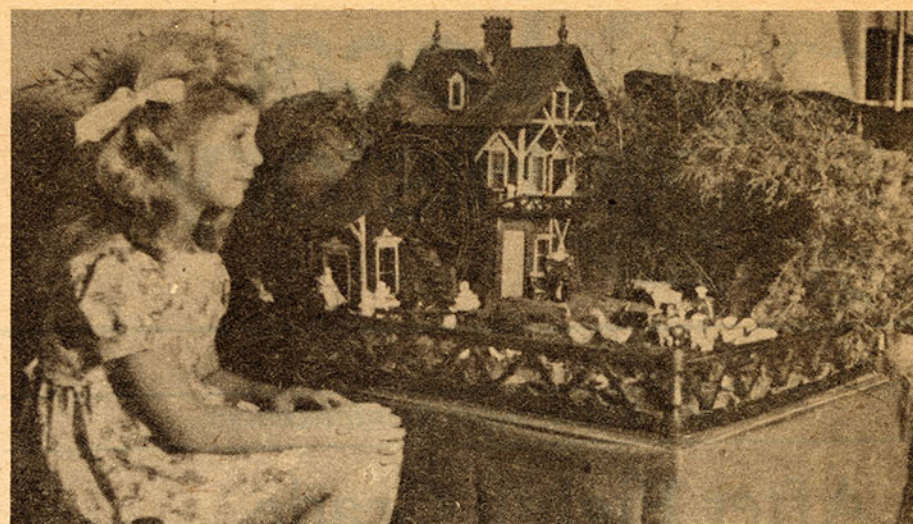
to the old "third woods" on Stone School Road, because it had many fallen trees with lots of moss. But preparation of the garden and tree was shrouded in secrecy from the younger children until Christmas. The library doors were locked, and for two weeks before Christmas the little children heard Santa and his workers hammering and bustling about, but saw little through the keyhole. By Christmas morning, Miss Eberbach recalls, "we were almost at the bursting point," until the sliding doors were drawn back to reveal the tree, splendid with lighted candles, balls, glitter, and an angel with tinkling bells at the very top. Beneath was the miniature garden, built on a platform with a fence around it. In front was a sprudeling fountain, and in back were hills, on one of which a glistening white castle was perched.

Over the years a mill was added to the Eberbach garden, with two electrically-powered millermen who came out and followed a little path around the fountain and into the hills, only to emerge again from the mill. Sheep, also run by electricity, moved around grazing under a tree.

Linda Eberbach's brother Carl started a Christmas garden in Milwaukee for his son Billy about 1925 or 1930. Milwaukee in those days had many artisans who specialized in church decorations, so Carl had expert assistance in carrying out ideas for his new garden, which followed, at first, the pattern of the one he had known as a child in Ann Arbor.

There was a similar castle with a crib scene and, later, a mill. By the time the mill was added, the simple wooden platform had given way to a great mass carved to resemble rocky hills and stone walls. Each year something new was added: people bustling about the mill,

Continued on next page



Michigan Historical Collections

Organ manufacturer David Allmendinger made this mill with lots of geese for his big family. His great-granddaughter Susan Lyn Allmendinger posed with it for a Christmas picture in 1947.



Mary Christensen's extensive Christmas scene has been an Ann Arbor institution since just after World War Two. Each year the arrangement is different, and school children from all around come by to see it and hear stories about the tiny elves and dwarves that inhabit this North Pole wonderland.

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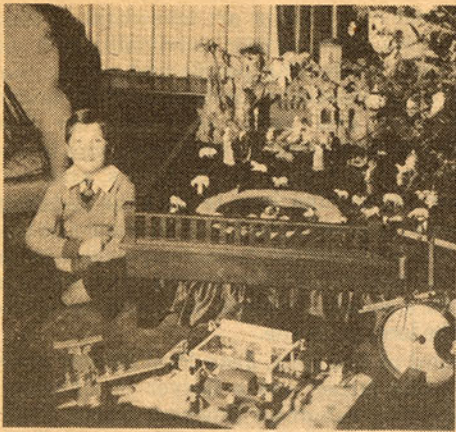
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Carl Eberbach started out by building a Christmas garden for his son Billy. A stone castle with a creche was the nucleus.



But gradually the scene grew. Recirculating water and a watermill replaced the mirror pond, and a naturalistic carved platform with steep hills supplanted the low table and railing.



Photos courtesy Linda Eberbach

Finally the scene acquired rocky cliffs inhabited by shepherds and their flocks and crowned by camels. A painted backdrop depicted the city of Jerusalem. New figures were added yearly.

more and more sheep, shepherds in the hills, and finally, camels silhouetted against a painted backdrop of the city of Jerusalem, including the star of Bethlehem, a translucent star-shaped patch lighted from behind. The garden had become a panorama too big to fit under any Christmas tree, however large. It was set up between two smaller, undecorated evergreens, with drapery arranged to frame the scene and create an illusion of depth next to the painted backdrop.

Elaborate Christmas scenes weren't limited to German families. Mary Christensen's mother, who grew up in England, always built a Christmas village beneath the tree. Instead of the typical German mill and grassy garden, with its obscure relation to the winter holiday, Mrs. Christensen's mother's display represented a North Pole scene, with

dwarves, elves, and fairies peeking out of little snowy grottoes and villages.

Mrs. Christensen still has her mother's moulded lead and porcelain figures, but over the years her layout has grown until it's at least eight feet long and four feet high, populated by hundreds of elves and reindeer.

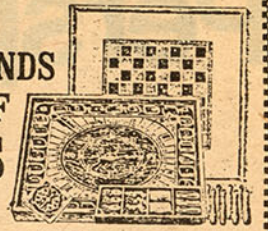


Each year the arrangement is different, and each holiday season Mrs. Christensen holds an open house for Ann Arbor children. Over two generations of children have seen the Christmas display, and Mrs. Christensen has encouraged many of them to start their own villages.

Young visitors question the reasons for everything, so she has developed stories behind the scene and its figures. The entire tableau, she tells them, represents Santa's North Pole workshop village just at the time when Santa is about to take off in his sleigh to deliver the gifts to the rest of the world. The elves, after a long year of working to make presents, can now get out and play. Santa waves goodbye to his recently-retired parents (from whom he's taken over the business) as they rock by the fireside in their home.

Children and parents can visit the display at 1144 Newport Road by calling 662-8346. Last year's open house was supposed to be the last, but Mrs. Christensen says, "so many kids called up asking about it for this year, I couldn't disappoint them." She feels a sense of obligation, but admits "More than anything, I love doing it."

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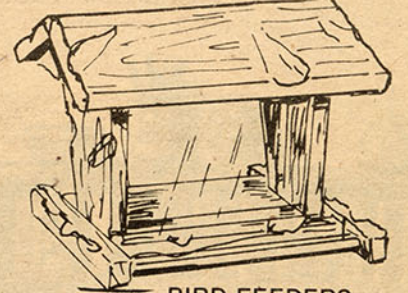


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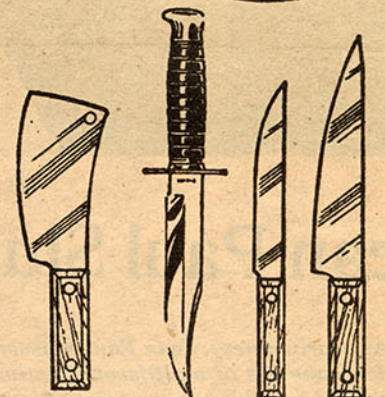


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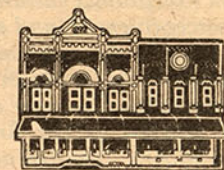


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# Perspective

*Painter, Critic, Teacher, Museum Director, Lover of Art  
He Turns 90 This Month*



## Jean Paul Slusser Reminisces and Reflects

At nearly ninety, Jean Paul Slusser continues to lead a wide-awake life of multifaceted activity and critical contemplation. Bill Lewis, associate dean of the School of Art, is Slusser's friend and former pupil and colleague. He considers Slusser an exceptional cultural resource because of his experience, perceptiveness, and age. "I pay a great deal of attention to what he thinks about art," Lewis says. "I've read some criticism he wrote in the twenties. His ability to foresee what would become of new art then is really something." Slusser, as the first director of the University Museum of Art, "worked on a shoestring and

performed miracles," in Lewis's words. And as a painter, Lewis feels, Slusser has developed and even improved in his post-retirement years.

The Observer is pleased to present a biographical sketch, based on several interviews with Jean Paul Slusser, to help commemorate his birthday.

Jean Paul Slusser turns ninety this month. That means he was born in 1886 and was already thirty when he served in World War One. Listed in *Who's Who* as writer, teacher, and painter, he has lived through and observed

with interest every major art movement of this century. Because of his characteristic conviviality and zest, he has known many interesting people and played many roles: those of an enthusiastic, ambitious U-M undergraduate between 1906 and 1910, art critic for the *Boston Herald*, a painter leading a stimulating and festive artist's life in Greenwich Village in the 1920's, and, for the past fifty years, the guiding force of both the fledgling U-M art department (he acted as its first chairman) and the Museum of Art (as its first director, he was responsible for many of its major acquisitions). Today, as the *Ann Arbor News* art critic with a Sunday column, he's still an active participant in the local art scene.

The third of five sons, Jean Paul Slusser grew up near Chicago. His father was a lawyer in Chicago, and the family lived in suburban Downers Grove. Both parents were farm people by upbringing. They seemed to have had a natural love of learning. "My mother had a literary touch," Slusser told us. "She had a column under the pseudonym 'Hepsy Neff' for the standard farm journal of its time—the *National Stockman and Farmer*. And she had a passion for writing.

"We were a very well-read family. There were no movies in those days—no distractions. Evenings Father or Mother would read aloud from the complete works of Dickens or Thackeray.

"That started me off in a certain direction. So when I came to college, I really wanted to be a writer."

### A U-M Freshman in 1905

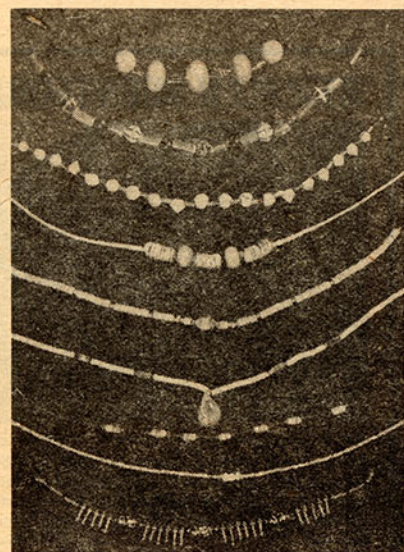
When Slusser arrived at the University of Michigan in 1905, after a year of teaching school, the literary college "was a small place where you knew the faculty and made loads of friends. College spirit was being fostered in the old-fashioned way," he recalls, "and the freshman-sophomore rivalry was being cooked up."

Slusser took advantage of every kind of opportunity offered by college life. "I was a terribly shy youngster when I came here. I couldn't swim. I couldn't dance." But by energetically pursuing a variety of activities, he became one of the most sociable persons on campus. He taught himself to swim in the Huron. He took dancing lessons. He ran cross-country.

He also pursued his classes with great interest: he vividly remembers his sophomore philosophy class as well as the class in international law taught by James Burrill Angell, long-time president of the university. But his major interest was then writing, and he got "an excellent grounding" in it from the famous Fred M. Scott, author of the leading college rhetoric textbook in the country, who was known for his seminars for aspiring writers. Scott taught a class in journalism writing when the field was in its infancy. Slusser received a good deal of encouragement from Scott, and after graduating Phi Beta Kappa, he followed Scott's advice and spent a year studying abroad. Already fluent in German, Slusser chose the University of Munich, where he began the study of linguistics but found himself drawn by lectures of some of the world's leading art historians and critics. The year was 1910. Art appreciation then was rarely taught in the United States. In Munich Slusser saw abstract art and heard Fritz Burger lecture on Cezanne, the Fauves, and other experimental artists before they had even been exhibited in North America.

Slusser's first pull to the world of art was in Munich; it presaged a later life that would be immersed in art. At that time, however, literary success was still Slusser's ambition. His youthful goal—never fulfilled—was to publish in

Continued on page 12



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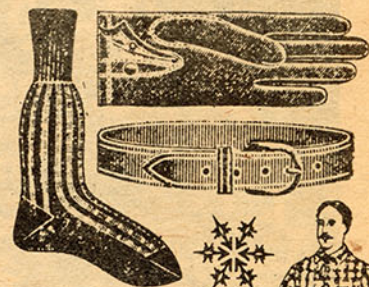


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## ONE THOUSAND FRESH CAPS CAST INTO BLAZE

**Picturesque Observance of the Class  
Transition in Sleepy Hollow Last  
Night—Rousing Speeches.**

Before the largest crowd yet attracted by a cap night celebration the freshman class were formally ushered into the dignity of sophomoredom at Sleepy Hollow last night. In a wild serpentine dance one thousand yelling freshmen cast the insignia of their first year of university life into the bonfire. For fully ten minutes the air was fairly alive with small gray caps. Then the dance died down, the freshmen circled around the fire, while the older classmen arose and with bared heads sang the "Yellow and the Blue."

Led by the band the classes, freshmen first, seniors last, marched six abreast through the campus, down State street to Huron, and thence to Sleepy Hollow. Henry F. Schulte acted as master of ceremonies, and after leading the crowd in several Michigan yells and songs called upon D. B. D. Blain to speak on "The Year in Athletics." After reviewing the year Blain indulged in some reminiscences.

"I remember my first big football game," he said. "It was six years ago in Detroit. We were wiped up the field and Iowa did the wiping. It took six years for the same thing to happen again. That was last Thanksgiving day in Chicago. But we took both defeats like men, and that is what makes true college spirit."

Hugh Allen spoke on "Class vs. De-

partmental Spirit," eulogizing the first and criticizing the second.

"Class spirit," he said, "binds us more closely together, but departmental spirit has the opposite effect. The question is not, 'Are you a lit or a law?' but 'Are you a Michigan man?' Let us have the interests of the whole university at heart and not merely one branch of it."

"The Transition," or passing of the classes, was the subject of a talk by Hugo Sonnenschein. He urged the younger classes, who would soon have the care of the university on their shoulders, to see that they did nothing to injure her name.

"Have a healthy, vigorous love for Michigan," he advised, "but beware of the rah-rah spirit. That is not an expression of true affection for your college. Take defeat as gracefully as victory. Stand up, doff your hats and sing 'The Yellow and the Blue' with the same fervor as though you had won."

"These last few years have seen other transitions than those of the classes. There has been a transition, a growth in college spirit never equalled before. Not so many years ago people would have laughed at the suggestion that such a celebration as tonight's could be made to go."

The Glee club sang "Laudes Atque Carmina" and other songs, and the Manolin club played "The Victors" before going on their annual sorority serenade.

At the conclusion of the speech-making and cap-burning, the classes marched in the same order back to the campus, where each had its own "sing," the freshmen at Freshman Oak, the sophomores in front of the museum, the juniors in front of University hall, and the seniors at Tappan Oak.

# Where, O where are the verdant Freshmen?



## Safe now in the Sophomore class.

-J. P. SLUSSER-1906-

Undergraduates had more school spirit and traditions 70 years ago than they do now, and Jean Paul Slusser—a freshman at Michigan in 1905-06—was especially enthusiastic. This is a page from his scrapbook commemorating the spring day his class graduated from freshman to sophomore status—a big step given the traditional hazing of freshmen by sophomores back then. On that day, the freshmen were able to throw their beanies, which had stigmatized them through the school year, into a big bonfire built in the "cat hole" where the Student Health Services building is today. Slusser kept the top button to his beanie [it graces the center of the above page] and drew this picture of the event. At the top he pasted into the scrapbook a newspaper article which appeared the day following the event.



## Perspective/Continued



Equestrian Act

Jean Paul Slusser



Two Slusser linocuts. The circus scene to the left was inspired by his frequent visits to the Madison Square Garden circus in the early 1920's. As an employee of the New York Sun Slusser had a press pass which admitted him free and allowed him "to hobnob with the clowns." The linocut to the right is of a house on East Huron which was torn down to build the A & P store [now Mielsel's].

the *Atlantic Monthly*. After the year in Munich he spent a year at Michigan teaching rhetoric and earning his master's, followed by two years teaching English Composition at the University of Texas in Austin.

### Audacious Art Critic for the *Boston Herald*

Then, Slusser says, "I went to Boston to lead the literary life. When I was struggling there, I fell into a job as art critic of the *Boston Herald*. They had just lost their art critic when I walked in. They said, 'go down to Copley Hall and write an article about what you see there.'" Slusser complied and that same day wrote his first review, published under the heading of "Gossip of the Galleries." The ease and confidence of those first youthful judgments astonish Slusser today. Here is the beginning of Slusser's first art column for the *Herald*, written in 1908:

*It is unfortunate that the exhibition of paintings by Edmund C. Tarbell now on view at Copley Hall comes late in the season when many people have left town. In many respects this is the most important exhibition that has been held in Boston this year, the most important in some regards that has been held here in many years.*

*It signifies, in fact, first that here in Boston we have one of the most brilliant and accomplished painters at work in this or any other country today, and secondly, that the art of America is distinguishing itself among that of other nations for sanity, refinement, and technical perfection at a time when these qualities are too often on the decline.*

"So," Slusser recalls, "for two years I batted out columns and paid my rent that way." This continuous exposure to the world of art reinforced Slusser's growing interest in painting. He enrolled in the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and began receiving his first formal education in drawing. During this same period he learned landscape painting at an art colony at Woodstock, New York in the Catskills. Here he developed his interest in the subject matter of most of his prize-winning paintings and prints over the next several decades.

Woodstock led immediately to a hitch in the army, and then to an exciting period in Manhattan—Greenwich Village to be exact, when it was a fresh mecca for free artistic spirits from across the country. There Slusser had a studio and worked for the *New York Sun* as Henry McBride's assistant.

"I guess I was a wide-eyed innocent from the Middle West—and not the first one, either," Slusser recalls. "How I enjoyed everything. I went to all of Eugene O'Neill's plays at the Provincetown Theater. . . . I also had a press pass to the Madison Square Garden circus, and I hobnobbed with some of the clowns. I was terribly poor in those days and didn't have to spend a penny there. . . . Then Lady Bountiful (Mrs. Fred T. Ley, wife of a wealthy contractor) drove up in a limousine one day. She asked me to decorate her apartment . . . and she paid me handsomely. I got a commission from a Viennese decorator who sold her a very expensive Renaissance tapestry. He gave me a substantial commission. So with that money I went to Munich to study with the art teacher Hans Hoffmann, a very famous man."

### Back to Michigan

Landscape painting brought Slusser back to Ann Arbor in 1925. The University at that time had no formal art department at all; architecture director Emil Lorch asked Slusser to join the faculty to teach landscape to architects to improve their renderings of buildings.

Slusser first lived on the remote and somnolent heights of Pontiac Trail in the big white Fremont Ward house. He drove a Model T to classes and divided his professional attention between teaching and painting. Canoeing on the river was a passionate diversion.

Among Slusser's many friends here was Robert Frost, who lived a block down Pontiac Trail while poet-in-residence at the University in 1925. Eleven years older than Slusser, Frost was then in his 50's. Slusser remembers him as "a charming neighbor. He used to love to come over on the evenings when he was taking his walk after dinner, in the spring and fall especially, and tap on my French window. I'd invite him in, and he'd sit awhile or we'd go walking together. He was very much like his poems. Very soft spoken. Slow spoken. With a rather tired, quizzical face. Unpretentious in manner and dress. His personality was exactly the kind you would expect from his poetry. He became a sort of patron of mine. He used to be pleased, apparently, that I was an aspiring artist. So he bought some of my things—a set of woodblock prints and some water colors."

Years later, one day in the late 1930's, Slusser saw Henry Ford gazing at the same beautiful Greek Revival house Frost had lived in a decade before. (Ford had been



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roaming around southern Michigan for the past several years buying up interesting old buildings to include in Greenfield Village.) Not long after Ford's visit, the house was dismantled and taken to Greenfield Village, where it is today, leaving nothing behind but a lot with a foundation and a hole in the middle. Slusser figured this would be an excellent site to build on, and he was eventually able to buy the lot. He asked U-M architecture teacher George Brigham to design him a functional studio-house, completed in 1939, which has given him much pleasure. Its light-filled central studio space is equally suited to painting, entertaining, and everyday living.

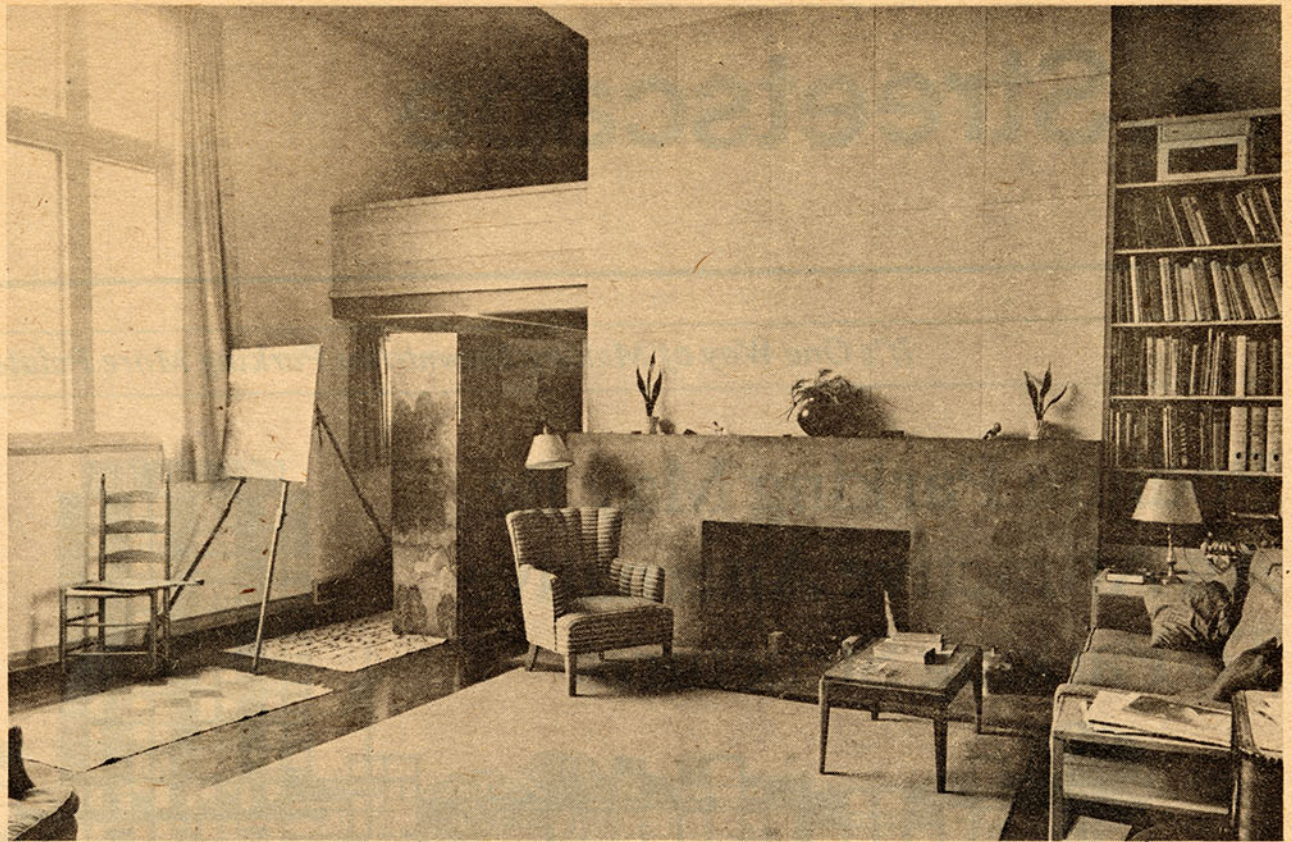
### Director of a New Art Museum

When the art section became recognized as a unit within the architecture department, Slusser became its first chairman. In 1946 he was appointed the first director of the University's recently-organized museum of art. The following decade was the most fulfilling period in his life. His task was to fill the fledgling museum with distinguished works of art. Back in the 1940's and 1950's, when art prices were still within reason, it was possible to make exciting impact with the limited University budget allocated to art acquisition. Through his many art contacts here and abroad, Slusser was able to acquire some first-class works—to name a few, the paintings "Begin the Beguine" by Max Beckmann and "Boy" by Ben Shahn, the drawing "A Walk with Child" by Paul Klee, "The Bathers," a famous print by Cezanne, and the sculptures "Happiness" by Jacques Lipschitz, "Tahstvat" by David Smith, and "Figure" by Henry Moore.

Slusser continued to paint after his retirement in 1956, extending his range to abstract works. Today he lives in the same house he built in 1939, with the sturdy self-reliance that has been a hallmark of his life.

Because he's observed the art scene for the better part of this century, we asked Slusser how he views the past few decades in art. As an art critic, he's given a good deal of thought to the question of contemporary trends in art, so his answer didn't take any time to formulate: "I think contemporary art has taken a somewhat negative direction. I think there is a great deal that passes for art that is crass show business. A great many blind avenues are being taken by members of the younger generation. Art has lost a great deal by following Mies van der Rohe's famous edict—'Less is more.' I don't think less is more over the long haul. I think more is more. In the time of Leonardo, less was not more.

"Now, painting has taken a very narrow road to follow. And it seems to me it's taking us nowhere. I mean, leaving out all possible imagery seems to me a great loss. But I don't worry about art. Art is ineradicable. It'll come back no matter what we do. But right now it seems to be in a dim passage. A little bit confused and confusing. I'd like to live long enough to see art embrace honest communication of a very important sort. Some say art is not communication. Well, what in the hell is it, then? It is



Eck Stanger

The two-story studio-living room is the heart of Jean Paul Slusser's home, designed for him by U-M architecture professor George Brigham. The huge window lets in lots of northern light for painting. Behind the folding screen [painted by Slusser] is his writing desk and canvas storing area, from which a steep ladder-like stairway leads to the balcony reading nook/guest bedroom.

communication—thank God for it. The pendulum will swing back. In fact, it's a bit overdue."

### Reflections on Our Age

Slusser isn't the sort to indulge heavily in gratuitous philosophizing, so he waved off with a laugh our question about what basic lessons his ninety years have taught him about life. "My only rule is to follow my instincts," he said.

But we wouldn't let him off that lightly and followed up by asking him how he compares this time in history with the period before World War One. He thought a moment and said, "There was very little back then, by comparison, to divert you. And so you concentrated on what you were doing more intensely. It wasn't possible, to quote Alice, to believe more than a certain number of impossible things before breakfast. And so you concentrated on what you

were doing. Today, we're spread a little bit too thin. We tend to be so eclectic. My pet metaphor is the chameleon which is put on a fabric of scotch plaid and goes all to pieces.

"I think we're probably overstimulated today. We try to follow too many improvements that turn out not to be improvements, in the end. Perhaps a very salutary period for this country was the Depression. Our salaries at the University were cut. Americans piped down a little bit—they didn't think they could have everything every single minute of every single life. They made their expectations a bit less. Now we expect everything.

"I'm quite heartened by the current desire—expressed in all sorts of bizarre ways—for simplicity, and wholeness on the part of the younger generation. They're more tolerant. They don't expect so much, perhaps. They don't believe in enormous super conglomerates in business, they believe in small scale operations. That seems to me a very healthy reduction in the scheme of things."

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Tasty Tidbits is Julian's biweekly newsletter about health and nutrition featuring Applerose merchandise. Get it at APPLEROSE, 300 W. LIBERTY (open 9-6).

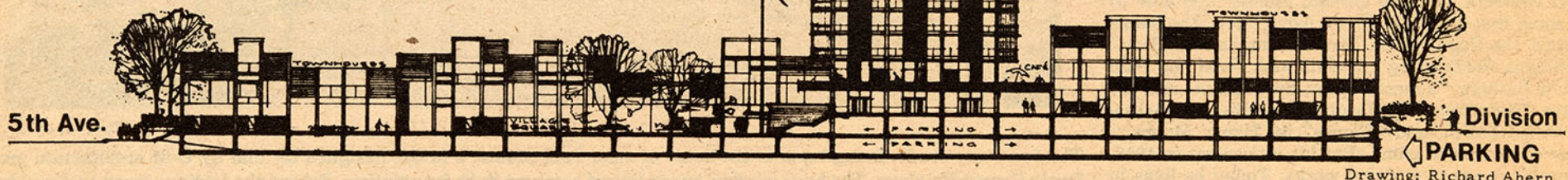




# Streetscape

*It's One Way of Making Downtown Parking More Palatable to the Eye*

## Podium Parking May Be An Attractive Alternative To Parking Structures



Podium parking could be combined with low and high rise housing on the library lot between Division and Fifth. The change in street levels could allow for "piggyback" podium parking with overlapping levels.

By RICHARD AHERN

Present shortages of parking spaces in the downtown area are expected to increase substantially in the coming years. How are we to meet this need for more parking and not also add further parking lot and parking structure blight to downtown? That's a major concern of those who want the downtown area to be a more person-oriented, more pleasing looking place.

An alternative to conventional parking facilities not yet tried in Ann Arbor is podium parking, a scheme which may be the most sensitive solution to the parking problem as well as cheaper than parking structures to implement. Podium parking has long been advocated by Ann Arbor architect/planner Dick Ahern, who has developed several preliminary designs of parking podia to demonstrate their feasibility. Here is his analysis of their advantages over other ways of creating parking spaces:

The parking podium derives its name from the raised platform that supported and added dignity to the temples of ancient Rome. "Podium" is derived from the Greek word "podos," meaning "foot." Thus, podium parking is any parking facility in which the vehicles are covered by a low platform which serves both as a means of pedestrian circulation and as support for buildings. In most parking podium designs the parking area is depressed half a story below grade while the podium surface is raised half a story above grade.

A comparison of the podium plan with some other alternatives reveals its advantages for downtown areas:

*Parking lots* are appropriate where land costs are low, or as interim land uses in more densely developed areas. But they waste land, and they are unsightly.

*Stilt-parking*, in which apartment houses or other uses are raised a full floor level above the parking lot, permits more intense land use. But what the pedestrian sees from the sidewalk is an unappealing melange of columns, cars, and staircases.

*Multi-story parking structures* provide for a greater number of cars, but at a greater cost per car than for parking at grade or near-grade level. Structures cost more when they have to be built to support heavy moving vehicles. Additionally, security problems for both people and cars increase with every added floor. So do inconvenience and psychological resistance to using the facility at all.

*Mixed-use multi-story garages* would reduce unsightliness at the sidewalk level where stores or offices would be provided, but otherwise, all the other disadvantages of multi-level parking structures remain.

*Underground garages*, especially multi-level underground garages, whether covered by landscaped plazas or used to support buildings, are generally the most costly type of parking facility per car space. They require expensive excavation, retaining walls, 24-hour lighting, 24-hour artificial ventilation, greater policing, cleaning, and maintenance. Their greatest advantage is that they are hidden from sight (except for ramps) on the outside, but that is countered by their claustrophobic character inside.

*Parking lots* are appropriate where land costs are low, or as interim land uses in more densely developed areas. But they waste land, and they are unsightly.

*Podium parking* is a hybrid solution designed to maximize benefits and to minimize all costs, whether economic, social, functional, or aesthetic. From street level, a short ramp provides access down to the parking level which, on flat land, is depressed only four to four and a half feet below grade. The podium itself is raised about the same distance above grade. A parking podium can be designed with a window-like perimeter of about two or three feet of open vertical space surrounding the parking area. This slit provides natural light and ventilation, visibility and security. On sloping ground, typical of downtown Ann Arbor topography, podium parking can provide two levels of parking, each level with a different entry level from different level streets. Costs per space would increase for this solution, but more cars could be accommodated at a cost still lower than conventional parking structures.

Whether one or two levels, the great advantage of podium parking from the pedestrian perspective would be that the parking facilities are largely hidden from view, particularly at the all-important eye-level zone. From the sidewalk, the landscaped pedestrian surface dominates the visual scene.

The pedestrian surface itself, if well designed, can be a major asset to the area. Consider, for example, the description of a parking podium for the area next to the city library (now a surface parking lot) proposed by Ann Arbor Tomorrow: "A town center-park and gathering place in the block of the Library is envisioned. This could be incorporated with a podium parking facility. It would be arranged to provide both winter and summer recreation along with fountain, small open theater, lighting, park benches and picnic facilities coordinated with Liberty-Division Park. The podium parking makes the plaza and Library and "Y" readily accessible, plus safe parking for movie and special events."

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# Streetscape/Continued

## A New Walker's Guide To Ann Arbor and Environs

Ann Arbor is a fascinating place for walkers—if they know where to go. The best places to walk are somewhat out of the way. *Footloose in Washtenaw* is a compact volume of 23 recommended walks published by the Ecology Center. The section on urban walks hits the local highlights: topographically spectacular areas like Sunset and Spring Streets and the steep wooded Geddes Avenue; established neighborhoods with lots of character like Burns Park, the Old West Side, Lower Town (including Pontiac, Traver, and Broadway), northwest Ann Arbor, and the north central area around the Farmers' Market and Division and Ann; plus the in-town parks and natural areas like the Arboretum, Eberwhite Woods, and the Huron River park. The text points out places of special architectural or historical interest.

EDITED BY JOYCE BADER AND DONALD H. GRAY

## FOOTLOOSE IN WASHTENAW

The section on outlying natural areas should be even more helpful as an introduction to hiking trails in recreation areas and parks within an hour's drive of Ann Arbor. These can be baffling without a guide. *Footloose in Washtenaw* provides a clear map for each walk.

If you've been frustrated by using general Eastern American guides to trees, flowers, and birds, trying to figure out which of twenty-two varieties of oak or eight kinds of wild iris you might be looking at in this part of southeastern Michigan, *Footloose in Washtenaw* should be a help, too. The text of the nature walks points out what flora and fauna you are likely to encounter. Seasonal variations in walks are noted, too, and interesting geological formations are pointed out.

*Footloose in Washtenaw* is available for \$3.00 at local bookstores, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Ecology Center, 417 Detroit Street. The guide was researched and written by sixteen volunteers for the Ecology Center project. Don Gray conceived of the idea; he and Joyce Bader of the Ecology Center coordinated and edited the book.

## An Extensive Fall Street Tree Planting North of Huron

This fall about 160 trees have been planted in the central area north of Huron by the city forester's crews, using CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funds. Entire blocks left bare by removal of diseased mature trees now have Norway maples or honey locusts from 1½ to 2½ inches in diameter. (The nursery supplier gave the city at no extra cost many trees that were considerably bigger than the 1½ inches specified.)

All the merchants in the 200 block of North Main Street across from the old Post Office contributed extra to plant eight good-sized 3½ inch Norway maples in front of their stores. Jon Inwood of Top of the Lamp lampshade store organized the effort, which raised \$300 to cut and remove sidewalk concrete and \$57 a tree (a bargain price because ordered through the city). The city forestry division planted the trees at no charge, though a 2-man work crew had to work a week digging holes by hand to avoid and relocate underground Edison wires.

City forestry planted 704 trees this fall city-wide, 350 of which were requested by citizens. Tony Argiero, Bill DeBrooke, and Mary Hunt were startled to find trees planted on Detroit and Catherine streets only two weeks after they requested them at a hearing of the Elizabeth Dean Fund committee. City forester Bob Tate said they had been planned for a year, but citizen requests which are not self-serving do have an effect on forestry priorities.

The city forester is happy to work with neighborhood groups who want to plant trees. Barring complications like pavement and underground obstructions, the city will supply and plant trees 1½ inches in diameter.

A tree care information sheet is given to residents where new trees are planted. Extra copies are available from the city forester, 415 W. Washington.

The innovative "auxiliary city forester" citizen participation program was killed last year, however. The grass-roots tree care campaign would have trained interested neighborhood volunteers to identify tree problems and then regularly survey their neighborhoods and relay information to the city forester. Bob Tate was willing to conduct training sessions on his own time, in return for gaining more on-the-spot information about trees.

## Test Of the Town

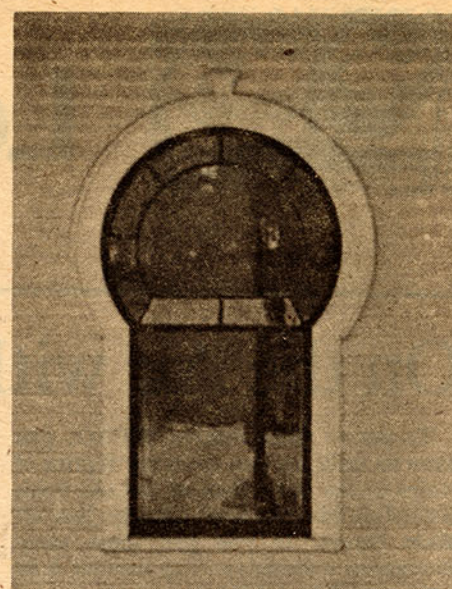
By BOB BRECK

Do you merely look at the Ann Arbor scene, or do you really *see* the city's many interesting and beautiful buildings and places? *Test of the Town* might help to develop your ability to look closely at the sights of central Ann Arbor... and win a prize if you're quick enough with the right answer.

Where was this photo made? Let us know the specific location via postcard or letter to *Ann Arbor Observer*, 502 East Huron, Ann Arbor 48104. Senders of the first two correct answers received will get their pick of any one of the thousands of records available at the Liberty Music Shop, 417 East Liberty.

So start looking for the object in this issue's photo, which is not too far from the Law Quad.

Last month's *Test of the Town* was the fan from a Model-T Ford that spins on top of the H & R Block income tax preparation office at 304 S. Ashley. Blacksmith Mick Finkbeiner occupied the building



Bob Breck

for many years and installed the fan to indicate that he also "tinkered with cars." Many older West Side Ann Arborites still have rings Mike made for them from horseshoe nails. L. Honig and joint entrants Don Canham and Kathy Horn were the first to identify the location correctly and won albums of their choice from the Liberty Music Shop.

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# Leisure

## On the Air with WPAG's Ted Heusel

To get to radio station WPAG, you have to walk up two creaking flights of stairs to the third floor of the old brick Hutzel Building on East Liberty, just off Main Street. If you get there early enough on a weekday—say around 6:45 a.m.—you'll find WPAG news announcer Ted Heusel scanning the AP wire material and assorted press releases which have accumulated since his last news cast at 2:05 p.m. the day before.

Ted's first newscast is at 7:05 a.m., and he usually has a lot of local and state news items to choose from as he hurriedly prepares the five-minute program. Once he's on the air, however, he delivers with a slow, deliberate air. Ted's news announcing style is a little like that of Paul

Harvey, the more flamboyant, nationally syndicated news announcer known for his personalized version of the news. Ted provides a straighter version of the news than Harvey (who is also heard on WPAG), but at times there is a detectable Harveysque inflection of disgust or pleasure in Ted's voice that more impersonal (and less colorful) newscasters avoid.

It's not surprising that Ted gives his newscasts more dramatic flair than the typical newscaster. He got a master's in drama from the U-M in 1950 and has been closely associated with the Ann Arbor Civic Theater ever since—as director, actor, board member, and president. During that same period he has been first

a part-time and then full-time radio announcer, starting out as a disc jockey and for the past ten years WPAG's news chief.

Ted also has his own program, "Community Comment," which is on from 11:10 to 12:00 and 1:20 to 2:00 on weekdays. The show's major feature is listener participation. Anybody who wants to can call up and express an opinion or make a comment. These Community Comment programs get to be free-wheeling affairs at times, and callers in recent weeks have heatedly debated such topics as the moral basis of capital punishment, the reasons HUD housing has been such a dismal failure, and whether or not the salary demands of local teachers are scandal-

ously high.

On some days the calls are repetitious and uninspired, but at other times views are expressed with a simple eloquence and conviction surprising to hear in fellow citizens presumably unpracticed in the art of oratory. It can also be a broadening experience to listen to what's on the minds of callers. Sometimes you learn that there are issues of profound concern to your fellow citizens that you hardly knew existed.

Such was the case on a recent Community Comment program we listened in on. The issue spontaneously arose about lay-offs of older salaried workers. It may or may not be a wide-spread problem, but, as callers made clear, it is a cruel phenomenon among those affected by this cost-saving administrative practice.

Here's a taste of what these Community Comment programs are like, in an abbreviated transcription of that afternoon's program:

An elderly lady calls. She wants to comment on the morning portion of Community Comment, during which Ted had interviewed two ex-marines who were promoting the upcoming Veterans' Day parade down Main Street. She says to Ted: *I'd like to thank you for having men like those marines on your program this morning. It just did my heart good to*

*"Community Comment" Is like Sitting around the Stove in the Old Country Store*



Dave Breen

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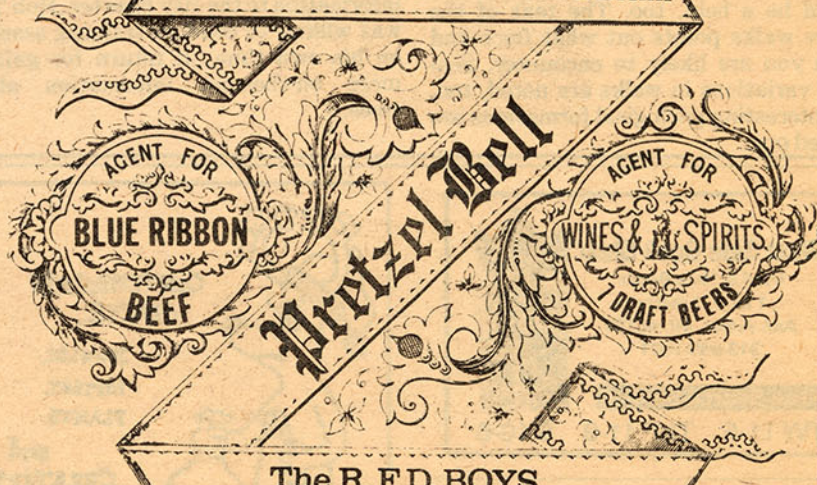
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Dave Breen

hear somebody who has some patriotism left and who cares enough for this country to fight for it. We've had so many people who've downgraded America, telling how terrible we were to be in Viet Nam that you began to wonder how soft we were becoming. In peace time so many of our people think they have a right to food and housing and everything without working for it. One day I encountered fifteen full columns of help wanted in the paper. I was always willing to take any kind of work. I don't know why somebody can't take those jobs.

Ted thanks her for her comments. The next caller, an unemployed middle-aged man, takes exception to what this woman seems to imply about the unemployed: There's somebody else with patriotism, and that's me. I volunteered for the service. I have every decoration from the Silver Star down to and including the Croix de Guerre. I don't know what jobs she's talking about. I was let out of mine. I'm 48, and I've applied and applied and applied and applied. Nobody wants me.

Ted says: Hey, you know, I've heard of eight or nine cases lately of somebody near 50 who they've let out of a job for a younger person, who they then pay less. Is this true in your case?

The unemployed man, clearly bitter, answers: Not only that, but they said I was overpaid. They let me go and hired a couple of younger persons and paid them the total I was making. I want to bring something to the attention of those eager beavers who have their nails chewed down to the cuticle. I'm talking about the guys 23 to 39: Now you just take note, pal—you're a throw-away. When you get up to your late 30's, they've got all kinds of automation now that'll take your job away. I don't know what you can do about it. It's technology and so forth. But, I'll tell you what—some of you people in a position to hire someone—forget you have a job. Take a day and go around and see if you can get a job. If you're in your 40's and 50's, you'll see what I mean, whether you've got two or three degrees or not. My wife had to go to work to support us. To support us and the children. I can't get anything. I can go out and get a job that will pay \$2.25 an hour, but that's it.

Ted says: It's interesting to know how you've been paid back for your patriotism. To me this is job discrimination.

The unemployed man replies: Listen—you try and prove it. We've had to

scrounge. We've sold everything right down to the cemetery lot, and I'm not exaggerating. They say, "Don't feel sorry for yourself." Baloney. I feel sorry for myself.

Ted says: Listen, I don't blame you. I think you've been royally screwed.

This talk about unemployment stirs up another caller's concerns. She says she is concerned about technology and unemployment and explains a proposed system she has read about whereby most money transactions will occur electronically. She predicts solemnly: This will shove a lot of people out of jobs. Everything is being taken over by electronics.

The next caller for some reason wants to know what the temperature is downtown. Ted tells her it is 41 degrees.

An older woman then calls and continues to express concern about unemployment among older citizens: I know when we get older, we're not quite as sharp. I have a sister who has been teaching at a private school for 33 years. She was supposed to be getting about \$15,000 a year. She had to negotiate down to a \$11,000 a year contract in order to keep her job. If she hadn't, she'd have been out, because there are young teachers who would be hired for \$7,000 in her place. She's 60. So I was thinking that rather than letting these people go completely as they grow older, perhaps we could suggest a negotiation where the salary would be decreased a bit, and they could still hold their job.

Ted thanks her for her suggestion and punches the button connecting the next caller, another woman. She reports that General Motors is moving six plants down South to get out of the clutches of the unions. She says: I don't think that's right. The union plants—they protect the worker in a lot of ways.

An older man, more indignant than the last caller, is next in line with a comment:

This would never happen in a union plant—this letting go of older workers. Not only would it not happen, but he would be getting progressive raises until his retirement. And then he'd be getting a nice pension. I just hope that people listening in plants voting against union representation just think of this gentleman who called in and others like him. It's a crime. With a proper union, things like that can't happen.

Finally, a woman calls and breaks the spell of mounting indignation. She asks Ted if he saw the Chinese acrobats last Sunday night at Hill Auditorium. Ted says he hadn't. She reports: They were just terrific. I just thought they were out of this world. You could hardly believe your eyes.

Ted thanks her for calling and tells his audience that that's all the time left today for Community Comment.

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## Leisure / Continued

## Leisure Notes

You may have already heard Jim Loudon's breathtakingly dramatic reports on the Viking Mars explorations on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" (on WUOM from 5 to 6:30 p.m.). Jim is based right here in Ann Arbor, as chief demonstrator at the U-M Exhibit Museum Planetarium. On December 14 (Tuesday) you can hear him in person, waving his arms as he talks non-stop and enchants (or overwhelms) an auditorium full of fans of all ages. The place: Auditorium 3, Modern Languages Building, 812 E. Washington (behind Burton Tower). This, the December program in this year's *U-M Astronomical Film Festival*, is the first of three detailed reports on the Viking trips to Mars. The program will be "full of information you'll get nowhere else," Jim says.

Alexander Haley's best-selling book "Roots," the real-life family saga of American black history, will be reviewed by James W. Horton in the December 7 "Booked for Lunch" program at the Ann Arbor Public Library. The program begins at 12:10; free coffee and tea are provided, and brown bag lunches can be brought in. *Roots* is the result of Alex Haley's remarkable decade-long research into the history of his own family, which he traced back to Africa on the basis of stories handed down by his grandmother. James Horton, the reviewer, is a U-M assistant professor of history specializing in black studies.

"Little Mary Sunshine" is an outlandish musical, according to its producers, the Ann Arbor Civic Theater. This sentimental spoof includes a handsome hero of a forest ranger; Mary herself, the sweet ingenue; and production numbers in the style of Busby Berkley. It runs from December 15 through 19 at Lydia Mendlesohn Theater. Many performances are sold out, so call 662-7282 for ticket information or check at Ticket Central in Jacobson's.

Complete Cuisine, the new cooking store at 322 S. Main Street, is offering free cooking classes during December—"our holiday gift to Ann Arbor," in the words of co-owner Sandi Cooper. Classes run weekday evenings (except Friday) from 7 to 7:30 beginning Monday, December 6 and ending on December 21. Topics include Christmas specialties like marzipan fruits and a Yule log, plus hors d'oeuvres, crepes, quiches, cheese fondue, homemade pasta, and chocolate soufflé. Call 662-0046 for exact dates. Free lunchtime classes will also be given, from 12:30 to 1:00 on December 8 and 22.

Some members of the Dance Department (soon to move from Barbour Gym into the new Central Campus Recreation Building) are staging in Barbour Gym a "Druid Dirge" on December 3 and 4 at 8 PM, titled "In Honor of the Impending Destruction of the Barbour-Waterman Gymnasium." "Recycle Barbour-Waterman" buttons will be sold by the Recycle Barbour Water Buildings committee. It will also serve refreshments, show slides of the buildings' carved oak panelling, turrets, winding stairway, and other architectural charms, plus a videotape by Sid Gottesman featuring participants in the Barbour-Waterman decision and ensuing debate.



### Christmas Sings Include Handel's "Messiah," Carols around the Carillon

It was just a last-minute idea, said University Carillonneur Hudson Ladd about the last year's "Carols around the Carillon" community song-fest last December. But what an evening it turned out to be! In spite of the cold and sprinkling of snow, more than 300 people gathered on the Inglis Street side of Burton Tower to sing favorite holiday songs accompanied by Ladd on the Baird Carillon in Burton Tower. "We really never expected a crowd like that, not for the first year," said Ladd. "It was wonderful, simply wonderful."

This year another "Carols around the Carillon" has been scheduled, for Tuesday evening, December 14, beginning at 7:30 at the same location. Hot cider will again be furnished by Ann Arbor Bank. Leonard Johnson of the School of Music will direct the singing, and song sheets will be supplied.

Ladd plays the carillon from a heated studio directly beneath the bells in the tower, but he advises the others to "dress properly. The cider's hot, but it may not make it all the way down to your toes."

The Ann Arbor Community "Messiah" Sing gives everyone in town an opportunity to sing in the chorus on Georg Friedrich Handel's immortal oratorio. What began informally in Bob and Margaret Blood's living room nearly fifteen years ago is now organized on a public scale that last year attracted about 120 singers and a 40-piece orchestra.

The unrehearsed performance is "strictly for the enjoyment of the performers themselves," according to the Sing's organizer, Emerson Hoyt. Participants range from professionals to choir singers and amateurs of all abilities and ages, down to as young as eight or nine. Many parents sing and play with their children. Dr. Thomas Taylor of the U-M School of Music leads the chorus; concertmaster Charles Avaharian leads an orchestra composed of a nucleus from the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra.

The sing will be 2:30 Sunday, December 12 at the First Unitarian Church on Washtenaw at Berkshire. A brief warm-up for musicians starts at 1:30. There's only room for participants and their families. To participate, register first by calling Emerson Hoyt evenings at 761-6099.

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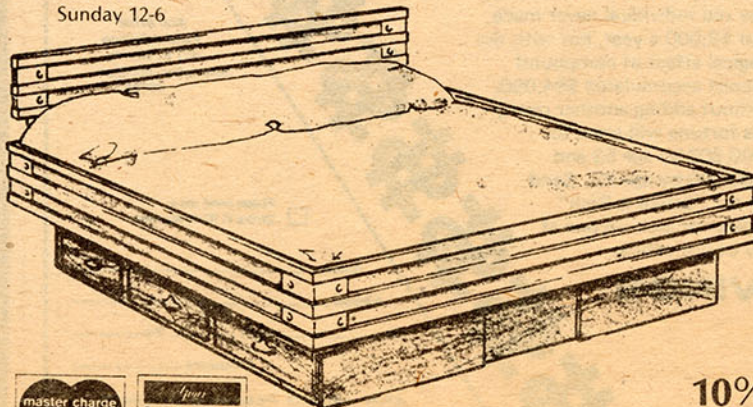
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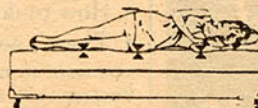
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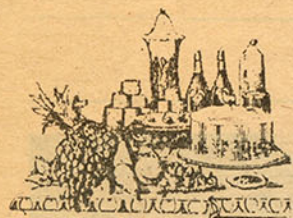
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# Food & Drink

## A New Produce Co-op Turns North Fourth Ave. Into Natural Foods Row

The Ann Arbor People's Produce Coop has joined the People's Food Coop and Wildflower Community Bakery on the 200 block of North Fourth Avenue to bring one-stop shopping to natural foods fans and bargain hunters. The three side-by-side stores offer a nearly complete range of food items from grain products, nuts, legumes, herbs, and dairy products at the People's Food Co-op at 210 N. Fourth, to

fresh-baked bread and rolls at Wildflower next door, and now a big variety of vegetables and fruits at the Produce Co-op, 206 N. Fourth.

The produce comes largely from Detroit's Eastern Market, where it is brought by Michigan farmers and by larger-scale wholesalers who ship it from across the country. Frog Holler, a natural foods distributor, supplies to People's Produce, too.

Organically-grown and conventionally grown varieties are both offered in some cases—oranges, carrots, and potatoes, for example. There's a 25% flat mark-up, so some items are much cheaper than supermarkets (collards and kale at 5

cents a pound, applesauce apples for 3 cents a pound, and carrots at 14 cents a pound), while others like bananas and mushrooms are almost the same. Whole boxes of produce are available on Saturday at a flat rate.

Co-op workers are not paid. Right now the organization is run by a 5 to 6 person board, but what direction it moves in depends on who wants to work and participate and how the group votes to run things. Volunteers are needed now for constructing shelves and painting, and also for cashiering and minding the store. Donations, advance payments, and no-interest unguaranteed loans up to \$25 are sought to finance the low-budget operation, which must pay for rent, truck expenses, overhead, and, of course, the produce. Shoestring operating capital can result in real cash-flow crunches. Interested workers can sign up at the store.

Both the People's Food and Produce Co-ops effectively force customers to change their buying habits. No neatly-labelled plastic-wrapped trays of fruit here. You bring your own bags and jars,



Dave Breen

or buy bags for 2 cents each. You weigh per-pound items yourself, and then add up the total. Anyone can shop at the stores; volunteer work by customers is appreciated but not required.

For at least six years, ever since the Rainbow People's Party started it, the People's Produce Co-op has sold big bags of produce each Saturday for a price of around \$4.00 for two bags. In response to people who wanted a place to buy individually-selected fresh produce throughout the week, the North Fourth Avenue location was opened in late November. Though things are just getting set up, co-op worker Larry Bassett says the response and volume has already been greater than anticipated at this early stage.

## A Holiday Gift Suggestion



The holiday season is here, so here's a suggestion to make your shopping easier. It's a simple, sensible suggestion and it makes sense: shop in the Ann Arbor area. There's really no need to go anywhere else.

There are more than 800 retail businesses in this area featuring a complete range of merchandise and prices. There's variety, quality and inventory. (Fact is, a lot of people find our area such an agreeable place to shop, they come here!)

With the cost of gasoline edging upwards, does it make sense to drive anywhere else? Ann Arbor's public transit system can take you to every shopping area in the city and its environs; there are the regular city routes and the extra-convenient, extra-hours Dial-A-Ride service.

After a day or evening of shopping, the Ann Arbor area has over 150 restaurants for relaxing and warming in a holiday spirit. Or when you head for your home after shopping, it's only minutes away.

Also, much of what's spent in this area stays here—to provide for the municipal services, educational institutions, cultural events, parks, and other facilities and services that make this area one of the best in the nation in which to live and work. Money spent here also means more jobs for our citizens, something not to be overlooked.

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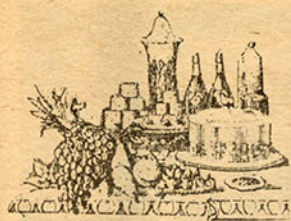
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# Food & Drink

## The Incomparable Detburger

Duane Mhros often works late as the head film projectionist at the Campus Theater, and after work, about 11:30 or midnight, he likes to relax with a drink and something to eat. He favors hamburgers for these late-evening meals, and there's only one in town he finds worthy of raves: the Detburger, a specialty of the Del Rio Bar on West Washington.

The Detburger, according to Duane, is incomparable: "There's no other hamburger like it." No lettuce, no tomatoes, no need for ordinary mustard and

ketchup. It begins with top-quality ground round steak bought from Steeb Brothers meats, then combines green pepper, mushrooms, black olives, onions, and American cheese. The whole ensemble, steamed in beer, is served on a Koepflinger sesame bun or an onion roll.

Contrary to some impressions, the Detburger doesn't commemorate Detroit; it honors Tom "Det" Detweiler, one-time Del Rio cook who invented this unique version of the hamburger back in 1971. One night a group of people came in to the bar wanting "something different," so Det put pizza ingredients (green pepper, black olives, onions and mushrooms) on a hamburger and steamed it in beer under a pan lid. Beer was a favorite Detweiler ingredient in many other dishes as well, from meat loaf to stale beer pancakes. Tom's wife Jilie added the cheese to the Detburger to hold the pizza garnishes on.

The hungry customers were pleased and came back again and again, asking for the same burger, "the burger Det made." Soon it was known as the Detburger and formally included on the menu at the next printing. Today the Detburger comes in three sizes: 1/6 pound for \$1.40, 1/4 pound for \$1.90, and a gargantuan half pound for \$2.80.

Do you have a favorite meal in a central Ann Arbor restaurant? You can win a \$25 gift certificate from Borders Book Shop if you send us a winning description of why it's your favorite meal. Entries should be from 100 to 400 words. We're looking for genuine, articulate, and enthusiastic descriptions. Restaurant employees and their families are naturally excluded from winning.

Send entries to:

ANN ARBOR OBSERVER

"Meal of the Month"

502 East Huron

Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Please include your name, address, and phone number on your entry.

## Meal of the Month



Linda Baur

Duane Mhros prepares to attack the giant 1/2 pound Detburger.

Detburger fan Duane Mhros usually completes his meal with an antipasto salad, consisting of grated mozzarella cheese, a few pepperoni slices, sweet onion, and black olives on a bed of Bibb lettuce (much more interesting than ice-

berg). Duane eats it with gusto. He told us, "I was enjoying it one night so much that somebody next to me told me he never saw anybody enjoy their food so much." At 85 cents, Duane considers the salad one of the best buys in town. •

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